Telling Yourself Helpful Things

This tool involves **purposely telling yourself more helpful and comforting things**, rather than believing all your pesky anxious thoughts.

First, sit down and come up with a list of general helpful statements that you can say in any situation. Try writing some of them down on little **coping cards**, or email or text them to yourself so you can look at these statements when you need to. Repeat these statements to yourself every day for two weeks.

It may feel unnatural or fake at first, but keep at it and these thoughts will slowly feel more familiar and true (because they are true!). If you practice saying these things to yourself, then over time these more helpful thoughts will start to pop into your head on their own.

Examples of **general statements**:

- The world is a pretty safe place.
- I can do this, I will be OK.
- I am stronger than I think.
- I can handle this.
- I can cope with most things.
- I can feel anxious and still do it.
- I will not let anxiety stop me from my dreams.
- It's just anxiety, it's not dangerous, and it's just temporarily uncomfortable.
- These are just my anxious thoughts. I don't have to believe them.
- I don't need to assume the worst.
- It's okay.

> Either you control your attitude or it controls you.

Or you can come up with some helpful coping statements for a specific situation. For example, if you have to debate a topic in front of your class and are afraid of messing up or of others laughing, write down and repeat specific statements to yourself such as:

- Who cares what others think, they won't be perfect when it's their turn!
- I did this in class last year and I can do it again.
- I have time to practice. I can ask for help.
- I'm intelligent and interesting. It will go great.
- Hey, I can handle this. I've been embarrassed before and the feeling doesn't last forever.
- If I mess up, what's the big deal? I will laugh at myself with them and keep going.
- Oh, there are my anxious thoughts again. I don't have to believe them, I can just let them go.

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